

By Kevin McCarthy    August 19, 2011    [Link](#)

I have often written that reducing the size and scope of government is crucial to turning our economy around. Locally, I am fighting in two areas to reduce Washington's burdensome, job-crushing regulations.

First, there are hundreds of thousands of acres recommended by the federal government to be opened up that could invigorate our rural communities. In July, the House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands held a hearing on legislation I introduced, H.R. 1581, which would compel Congress to act on these recommendations. Chris Horgan, the Executive Director of Stewards of the Sequoia and Dave Freeland, a retired Forest Ranger for the Sequoia National Forest traveled to Washington to serve as witnesses. ( [Click here](#) to read their testimony)

The hearing marks an important step for this bill that is simple, straightforward and just good government. It is simple because it acts on recommendations already made by the federal government. It is straightforward because it refers to only the acreage recommended and does not affect any other lands; nor does not preclude Congress from designating these lands as wilderness in the future. It is good government because it returns management to local communities, who know best how to utilize their lands. So whether these lands are used for continued conservation, increased recreation or other development – decisions would be made through the local land management planning process. Approximately 280,000 acres in our district would be opened up under my bill, which could create jobs and increase revenues for our local communities. In addition, greater access and healthy forest management could significantly reduce the risks of catastrophic wildfires. The 2002 McNally Fire burned over 52,000 acres and the 2008 Piute Fire burned more than 18,000 acres, predominately in areas currently under lock and key that my bill would release. H.R. 1581 needs to be heard in the Agriculture Committee and the full Natural Resources Committee before it heads to the House floor, and I am working to ensure it becomes a reality this year.

Second, I am aggressively pushing legislation - H.R. 1582 – to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from implementing a new air quality standard that could cripple our local economy and result in a de facto ban on new businesses until a compliance feasibility study can be conducted. This bill would also repeal the \$29 million fine EPA has already levied on us for violation of an air standard that isn't even in existence! Cleaning up the air is

important, and I commend the strides the Central Valley has made to that end. H.R. 1582 ensures we continue those efforts, but does so in a commonsense way, and I am working with the Energy and Commerce Committee to move it.

EPA's muddled air quality regulations are just the tip of the iceberg. In the coming weeks, you will see a concerted effort by my colleagues and me to tackle more unnecessary and burdensome federal regulations in order to make it easier to get people back to work.